

## **Environmental Attitude and Conservation Behaviour Based on Sex and Level of Education**

**Adrija Bhattacharyya and Mohua Chatterjee**

Bethune College, Kolkata

The present study has attempted to compare environmental attitude and conservation behaviour of a sample of higher education students in respect of their sex and level of education. 242 students comprising 109 males and 133 females, 136 pursuing graduation and 106 pursuing postgraduation courses in different colleges and universities of West Bengal were selected as sample following purposive sampling technique. The Short version of the Environmental Attitude Inventory by Milfont and Duckitt, and Pro-nature Conservation Behaviour Scale by Barbett et al. were administered, along with a general information schedule. Apart from the descriptive statistics, t-test was administered for further statistical analysis of data. The results revealed that male and female students differed significantly in some domains of environmental attitude, namely, enjoyment of nature, environmental threat, personal conservation behaviour, human dominance over nature, human utilization of nature, ecocentric concern and support for population growth policies. Significant differences were also noted between undergraduate and postgraduate students in the domains of environmental movement activism, environmental threat, altering nature and ecocentric concern. Furthermore, male and female students differed significantly in respect of pro-nature conservation behaviour and all its domains, namely, organized social engagement, individual engagement, planting and wildlife. Significant differences were also found between undergraduate and postgraduate students in all the domains of pro-nature conservation behaviour, except planting.

**Keywords:** Environmental attitude, Conservation behaviour.

The environment in conjunction with man has made it possible to make the earth a serene and magnificent planet of all. Environmental psychology since its inception has contributed to understanding how individuals and groups perceive and interact with their environment, and how these interactions affect their overall mental and emotional well-being. Environmental attitudes can be understood as the beliefs, values, and emotional responses individuals hold toward the natural world and environmental issues. These attitudes influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions, guiding our environmental decision-making processes and behaviours. Pro-environmental behaviour refers to actions and attitudes that are aimed at minimizing negative impacts on

the environment and promoting sustainability. Activities that are beneficial to the environment and have an effect on nature conservation are known as pro-nature conservation behaviours. In addition to potentially improving ecosystems, narrowing the value action gap (the gap between environmental attitude and pro-conservation behaviour) in conservation behaviour can also have an enormous beneficial influence on the wellbeing of individuals who are adopting conservation.

### **Environmental Attitude and Pro-environmental behaviour relationship**

Some theories and models help to explain the development and structure of environmental attitudes. They emphasize the

interplay among the components of attitudes, and highlight the role of values, beliefs, social norms and regulations, and perceived control in shaping individuals' environmental attitudes and behaviours.

### **Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

These propose that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence individuals' intentions and pro-environmental behaviour theories (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). TPB ascertains that we follow the course of actions that result in the most benefits (positive outcomes) at the lowest cost, in terms of energy, time and money; and that our behaviours are a direct result of our intentions.

### **Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN)**

This theory (Stern et al., 1999) posits that environmental attitudes and behaviours are influenced by personal values, beliefs about consequences, and social norms. VBN assumes that individuals behave in a pro-environment manner when they feel morally required to do so. According to Gifford and Comeau (2011), this moral duty may originate from inside (based on one's own morals), from outside (based on societal norms and other people's morals), or from both. According to this theory, pro-environmental values lead to pro-environmental attitudes which further leads to pro-environmental behaviour in individuals (Milfont et al., 2010).

### **The Norm-Activation Model (NAM)**

This model developed to explain altruistic and environmentally friendly behaviour, states that personal norms are more significant than social norms in guiding human behaviour (Liu et al., 2017).

### **New Environmental Paradigm scale (NEP)**

This scale by Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) is a widely used tool to measure

environmental attitudes. The NEP proposes that individuals' environmental attitudes can be classified into two main categories, that is, anthropocentric and ecocentric. Anthropocentric attitudes prioritize human interests over environmental concerns and view nature as a resource to be exploited. Ecocentric attitudes stress the role of intrinsic value of nature, and promote for its preservation and protection.

### **Cognitive Hierarchy Model**

This Model developed by Homer & Kahle (1988) suggests that environmental attitudes can be hierarchically structured. It proposes that cognitive components, such as beliefs, knowledge, and values, serve as the foundation for affective and behavioural components of attitudes. In this model, changes in cognitive components (e.g., increased environmental knowledge) can influence affective components (e.g., emotional connection to the environment) and subsequently impact behavioural intentions and actions.

### **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

This theory by Festinger explains how environmental attitudes help to predict the behaviour of individuals (Thøgersen, 2004). It advocates that human beings strive to maintain attitude behaviour consistency. Situations in which people have an environment-friendly attitude but behave inconsistently will change either their attitude or their behaviour.

### **Role of gender in environmental attitude and pro conservation behaviour**

Studies showed gender differences to exist in displays of pro conservation behaviours where women exhibited much more environmentally favourable behaviours and attitude than men (Siagian, et al., 2023; Trelohan, 2022; Raman, 2016; Plavsic, 2013). Contrary to those studies, males were also found to reveal significant environmental

awareness (Levine & Strube, 2012) and environmental practice (Moody-Marshall, 2023; Medina et al., 2016).

### **Role of level of education in environmental attitudes and pro conservation behaviour**

Saulik et al. (2024) found that pro environmental behaviour is influenced by people's age, gender, and educational level. A study conducted in Turkey revealed that undergraduate students had a higher positive environmental attitude but their behavioural responses were low (Kasapođlu & Turan, 2008).

### **Factors affecting conversion of Environmental Attitude to Pro-environmental Behaviour**

Researchers revealed that individuals' ethics, values, emotions, habits, social norms, as well as the costs and benefits of their behaviours, are addressed while displaying pro-environmental behaviour (Carmi, 2013; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Factors like witnessing others behaving pro-environmentally (with or without pro-environmental attitudes) (Sussman & Gifford, 2013); feelings of personal accountability and guilt (Kaiser and Shimoda, 1999); individual motivation (Pelletier et al., 1999); self-determined or internalized motivation (Osbaldiston & Sheldon, 2003; SGuin et al., 1998; Green-Demers et al., 1997) also influence behaviour.

### **Factors inhibiting Environmental Attitude from leading to Pro-environmental Behaviour**

Pro-environmental knowledge that exists without being converted into action can be understood by attributing it to the unpredictability about the results of action and a perceived lack of control over behaviour. Sunk costs like past financial expenses, incompatible goals and aspirations, behavioural momentum, and

perceived risks (physical, psychological, social, functional, financial risks) also explain this value action gap. Enhancing attention towards suitable media campaigns and well-planned pro-environmental messages can not only foster environmental attitudes, but also make environment-friendly behaviours more probable to occur.

### **Hypotheses**

- H1: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental attitudes.
- H1a: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of enjoyment of nature.
- H1b: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of support for interventionist conservation policies.
- H1c: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental movement activism.
- H1d: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern.
- H1e: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of confidence in science and technology.
- H1f: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental threat.
- H1g: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of altering nature.
- H1h: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of personal conservation behaviour.
- H1i: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of human dominance over nature.
- H1j: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of human utilization of nature.

- H1k: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of ecocentric concern.
- H1l: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of support for population growth policies.
- H2: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of pro-nature conservation behaviour.
- H2a: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of organized or social engagement domain of pro conservation behaviour.
- H2b: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of individual engagement domain of pro conservation behaviour.
- H2c: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of planting domain of pro conservation behaviour.
- H2d: Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of wildlife domain of pro conservation behaviour.
- H3: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental attitude.
- H3a: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of enjoyment of nature.
- H3b: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of support for interventionist conservation policies.
- H3c: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental movement activism.
- H3d: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern.
- H3e: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of confidence in science and technology.
- H3f: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of, environmental threat.
- H3g: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of altering nature.
- H3h: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of personal conservation behaviour.
- H3i: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of human dominance over nature.
- H3j: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of human utilization of nature.
- H3k: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of ecocentric concern.
- H3l: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of support for population growth policies.
- H4: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of pro-nature conservation behaviour.
- H4a: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of organized or social engagement domain of pro conservation behaviour.
- H4b: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of individual engagement domain of pro conservation behaviour.

H4c: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of planting domain of pro conservation behaviour.

H4d: Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of wildlifedomain of pro conservation behaviour.

#### **Objectives of the Present Study:**

1. To study whether the environmental attitudes of higher education students differ in respect of sex.
2. To study whether environmental attitudes of higher education students differ in respect of level of education.
3. To study whether the pro-nature conservation behaviour of higher education students differ in respect of sex.
4. To study whether the pro-nature conservation behaviour of higher education students differ in respect of levels of education.

#### **Method**

##### **Design of the Study:**

The present study has been a survey research focusing on assessment of environmental attitude and conservation behaviour practices of the selected sample of respondents.

##### **Sample:**

To select the sample, male and female undergraduate and postgraduate students studying at different colleges and universities of West Bengal were selected following the purposive sampling technique. 242 students comprising 133 females and 109 males were selected as respondents. Among the participants, 136 were pursuing undergraduate courses and 106 were studying postgraduate courses. In so far as the disciplines were concerned, 90 students

were from social science stream, 73 were from science stream and 79 were from humanities stream.

##### **Selection criteria:**

- Students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses with an age range from 18 to 23 years were considered as the subjects.
- Students from social science, pure science, bioscience and humanities streams were considered as respondents.
- All the respondents were Indian citizens.
- All the respondents were the residents of urban and sub urban areas of West Bengal.
- The higher education institutes situated at West Bengal were solely considered for selecting sample.
- Only those who were willing to participate in the study were considered.

##### **Tools**

*General Information Schedule:* The questionnaire developed by the present investigators contained items regarding some demographic variables like age, sex, mother tongue, educational qualification, discipline studied, nature of the educational institution, locality of the residence, duration of stay at the present residence etc.

*Environmental attitude:* This instrument developed by Milfont and Duckitt (2010) is a 7-point scale with response categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale includes 72 items, divided into 12 subscales, namely, enjoyment of nature, support for interventionist conservation policies, environmental movement activism, conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern, confidence in science and technology, environmental fragility, altering nature, personal conservation behaviour,

human dominance over nature, human utilization of nature, ecocentric concern, and support for population growth policies. A mean score of 0.82 indicates sufficient internal consistency and homogeneity across all 12 EAI-S sub-scales. The test-retest reliability coefficients varied from 0.62 for the “conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern” scale to 0.90 for the “personal conservation behaviour” scale.

*Pro Nature Conservation Behaviour Scale (ProCoBS)* This scale developed by Barbett et al.(2020) comprises 18 items, divided into four subscales. The non-gardening aspect termed as “Civil Action” behaviours are assessed by two subscales, namely, “individual engagement” (item numbers 4,5,6,8 and 9) and “organized/ social engagement” (item numbers 1,2,3 and 7). The gardening aspect is covered by the remaining two subscales, namely, “planting” (item numbers 10,11,15 and 16) and “wildlife” (item numbers 12,13,14,17 and 18). Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for the total ProCoBS, and the two sub-scales of civil action and gardening had been found to be high, that is, 0.893, 0.858 and 0.872 respectively. The reliability coefficients of the four factors, namely, Individual Engagement, Social Engagement, Planting and Wildlife were found to be 0.864, 0.797, 0.876 and 0.781 respectively.

**Ethical concerns**

The respondents were intimated about the purpose of the study, and data were collected after getting their consents. It was also ensured that the responses given by all the

subjects remained confidential and were used solely for academic purposes.

**Procedure**

With prior permission from the institution authorities, the questionnaires were administered on the sample participants following a pre-arranged programme schedule, and data were collected. After collection, the data were scrutinized, tabulated, and scored accordingly. Tabulation work was done separately for each scale and for each category of respondents.

**Statistical Analysis of Data:**

To portray the general characteristic feature of the participants, descriptive statistics like percentages and mode values were computed for each category of respondents. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each category of the selected students (male and female, and undergraduate and postgraduate) for each dimension as well as the total of both the scales, namely, Environmental Attitude Inventory and Pro Nature Conservation Behaviour Scale. To test the normality of the distribution, the skewness and the kurtosis were assessed. Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance was also applied to meet the assumptions of parametric statistics. Then t-test was used to compare the respondents, based on sex and level of education, on account of the concerned variables, namely, environmental attitude and pro-nature conservation behaviour, both in respect of individual dimension scores and total scores on the tests.

**Results and discussion**

Table I: Distribution of Means and Standard Deviations of Environmental Attitude Scores of Male and Female Students

Environmental Attitude Scale Dimensions	Female (N=133)		Male (N=109)		T value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Enjoyment of nature	35.301	6.031	33.633	6.369	2.087**
Support for interventionist conservation policies	31.331	5.736	30.991	6.832	0.421*

Environmental movement activism	29.217	7.564	30.642	6.397	1.528*
Conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern	22.241	5.215	23.092	4.506	1.342*
Confidence in science and technology	26.188	6.344	26.991	6.648	0.959*
Environmental threat	32.489	5.605	30.917	6.373	2.040**
Altering nature	21.248	5.501	21.743	4.589	0.763*
Personal conservation behaviour	35.684	5.661	32.716	7.049	3.556***
Human dominance over nature	14.782	7.439	16.991	6.720	2.400**
Human utilization of nature	17.128	6.390	19.092	5.959	2.452**
Ecocentric concern	33.308	5.897	30.486	6.255	3.604***
Support for population growth policies	32.203	6.638	29.403	8.468	2.815***
Total	331.173	24.437	326.624	28.924	1.304*

A high score indicates a favourable environmental attitude.

\* Not significant; \*\* Significant at 0.05 level; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

The demographic characteristics of the participants represents that most of them were aged around 21 years. Among the sample, 55% were females and the remaining 45% were males. All the students were the residents of West Bengal. However, Bengali was the mother tongue for most students but a small number of students' mother tongue was Hindi. The sample consisted of 56% undergraduate and 44% postgraduate students. 37% of the respondents were chosen from the discipline of social science, 30% of the subjects were studying science, and 33% of the participants were studying humanities. The samples were selected from different colleges and universities located in West Bengal, irrespective of the nature of the institutions. The majority of the students, that is, 64% were studying at government institutions, 27% of the sample belonged to private institutions, and only 9% of the participants were selected from government-aided institutions. A large portion of the selected sample, that is, 75% were the residents of urban area, that is Kolkata city, 25% of the respondents were suburban

dwellers. The students were staying in their respective residences for 20 years, on an average.

Table I indicates that the sex-based difference with respect to environmental attitudes of the concerned samples of students is not significant for overall environmental attitudes and some of its domains such as, support for interventionist conservation policies, environmental movement activism, conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern, confidence in science and technology and altering nature. Such findings speak in favour of acceptance of Hypothesis 1, that is "Male and female students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental attitude" and Hypotheses 1b, 1c,1d,1e,1g. However, Hypotheses 1a, 1f, 1h, 1i,1j,1k,1l are rejected, as significant difference between males and females have been found in the domains of enjoyment of nature, environmental threat, personal conservation behaviour, human dominance over nature, human utilization of nature, ecocentric concern and support for population growth policies. The present

finding is consistent with the observations of Hornejas (2021); Bozdogan et al. (2016), and Sarvestani (2012), and contradicts the findings of Fernández Manzanal et al. (2007) and Shobeiri et al. (2006).

Table I further shows that the present samples, irrespective of their sex, have moderately favourable attitudes toward the environment. The female respondents, however, obtained a slightly higher average score on the scale displaying a more

favourable attitude towards the environment than the males. This outcome is contradictory to the findings of Gökmen (2021) who concluded that gender affected environmental attitudes, with the females scoring lower than the males. Raman (2016); Müderrisoglu and Altanler (2011); and McMillan et al. (1997), however, found females to have higher positive environmental attitudes than their male counterparts which lie consistent with the present finding.

Table II: Distribution of Means and Standard Deviations of Environmental Attitude Scores of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

Environmental Attitude Scale Dimensions	UG (N=136)		PG (N=106)		T-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Enjoyment of nature	34.294	6.084	34.877	6.424	0.722*
Support for interventionist conservation policies	31.302	6.008	31.019	6.557	0.349*
Environmental movement activism	31.574	6.446	27.726	7.298	4.346***
Conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern	22.662	5.008	22.576	4.820	0.135*
Confidence in science and technology	26.868	6.123	26.142	6.922	0.864*
Environmental threat	31.103	6.138	32.651	5.734	2.003**
Altering nature	22.235	4.983	20.491	5.118	2.670***
Personal conservation behaviour	33.875	6.858	34.953	5.942	1.285*
Human dominance over nature	16.103	7.214	15.359	7.181	0.798*
Human utilization of nature	18.493	6.036	17.396	6.523	1.353*
Ecocentric concern	31.309	6.250	32.972	6.060	2.081**
Support for population growth policies	30.360	6.711	31.689	8.644	1.305*
Total	330.177	27.637	327.774	25.253	0.697*

A high score indicates a favourable environmental attitude.

\* Not significant; \*\* Significant at 0.05 level; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table II does not indicate any significant difference between undergraduate and postgraduate students in respect of environmental attitude and some of its dimensions, such as enjoyment of nature, support for interventionist conservation

policies, conservation motivated by anthropocentric concern, confidence in science and technology, personal conservation behaviour, human dominance over nature, human utilization of nature and support for population growth policies.



Hence, Hypothesis 3, that is, “Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of environmental attitude” and Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3d, 3e, 3h, 3i, 3j, 3l are accepted. However, in some of the dimensions of environmental attitude, namely, environmental movement activism, environmental threat, altering nature, and ecocentric concern, significant differences between the undergraduate and postgraduate students have been found. Therefore, Hypotheses 3c, 3f, 3g, and 3k are rejected. The finding is in contradiction with the research observations of Hornejas (2021) and Fernández Manzanal et al. (2007).

Table II further indicates that the undergraduate students have secured slightly higher average scores than the postgraduate ones. The higher scores of the undergraduate students specifically in the subdomains of environment movement activism and altering nature throw light upon the fact that today’s youth actively voice their opinion, participate, and promote campaigns like global climate strike, plastic free campus, tree plantation drives, clean India mission, etc. They take advantage of the social media platforms and digital tools for activism that

facilitates information sharing, organizing events, and creating online campaigns related to environmental causes. Fernández Manzanal et al. (2007) also found younger students to be more involved in environmental activities, such as protests and campaigns compared to older students. On the contrary, the postgraduate students have scored significantly higher in the subdomains of environmental threat and ecocentric concern. Wiernik et al. (2013), Otto and Kaiser (2014), Wang et al. (2022) in their research confirmed the role of enhanced perceived impact of environmental risks on human health. The repeated environmental crises like tsunamis, earthquakes, and avalanches, in the past few years have made people more concerned about caring for the environment, reducing pollution and actively engaging in environmental issues to prevent and decrease probable environmental threats. Future research may focus on assessing whether the differences between the undergraduate and postgraduate students’ environmental attitudes are due to differences in age and maturity, or knowledge obtained from years of education, or any other factors.

Table III: Distribution of Means and Standard Deviations of Pro Nature Conservation Behaviour Scores of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

Pro Nature Conservation Behaviour Scale Dimensions	UG (N=136)		PG (N=106)		T-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Organized social engagement	18.368	6.992	20.793	6.748	2.718***
Individual engagement	13.316	6.136	15.123	5.454	2.384**
Planting	16.552	7.159	17.434	6.709	0.978*
Wildlife	20.088	8.183	23.217	6.447	3.327***
Total	68.324	24.008	76.566	20.526	2.821***

A high score indicates a high level of pro-conservation behaviour.

\* Not significant; \*\* Significant at 0.05 level; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table III shows that undergraduate and postgraduate have differed significantly in respect of pro-nature conservation behaviour and its dimensions, except planting. Therefore, Hypothesis 4, that is, "Undergraduate and postgraduate students do not differ significantly in respect of pro-nature conservation behaviour." is rejected. Moreover, Hypotheses 4a, 4b, and 4d are rejected, whereas Hypothesis 4c is accepted based on the findings.

It is evident from Table III that the postgraduate respondents have scored higher, on average, than the undergraduate ones in all four dimensions of pro-nature conservation behaviour and so have higher inclinations to be engaged in pro-environmental behavioural practices in comparison to those pursuing undergraduate courses. These findings support the research observation of Kasapođlu and Turan (2008) who revealed that the undergraduate students in Turkey, despite having a highly positive environmental attitude displayed low responses to behaviours.

The findings indicate a disparity in the attitudes and behaviours among the present samples which can be attributed to the value-action gap of environmental attitude and pro-environmental behaviour. It indicates that having a favourable environmental attitude does not ensure the manifestation of pro-conservation behaviour and vice versa.

Ickes et al. (1982) listed four causes to comprehend this attitude behaviour gap, that is, normative influence, temporal discrepancy, direct versus indirect experience, and attitude-behaviour measurement. Ajzen and Fishbein in their Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour have also discussed the issue of attitude-behaviour discrepancy (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, & Fishbein, 1975). Attitudes do not directly shape people's behaviour; instead they influence the intention to engage in specific

behaviour, which in turn determines their actions. Intentions are impacted by societal (normative) influences in addition to attitudes.

Thus, our daily decisions and actions in response to the surrounding environment are shaped by many antecedent conditions. Individual differences along with intrinsic motivation shape every behavioural manifestation (Lee & Jeong, 2018). The present study affirms that, environmental attitude alone does not predict the pro-environmental behaviours of the individual, and the manifestation of the conservation behaviour necessarily does not indicate individual's pro environmental attitude. Behaviours might be in line with the social desirability or an outcome of social pressure. Thus, the findings indicate the presence of a value-action gap among the concerned group of respondents.

### **Conclusion**

The present study seeks to explore the environmental attitudes and practices of the young generation who will be the torchbearers of the future. An assessment of their understanding, knowledge and attitudes towards the environment and their conservation behaviour help us predict how the next generation would contribute to the earth and our ecosystem. The findings hint towards the need for inculcating awareness among people about environmental issues, antecedent conditions, and consequences of failing to comply with the environmental laws and regulations. Pro-environmental attitude is not necessarily associated with pro-environmental behaviour. Building a sustainable society is a long-term and multifaceted endeavour. It requires a shift in mindset, behaviour, and systems. Integrating sustainability principles into all aspects of society and working together in order to adopt transitions to renewable energy resources, sustainable urban planning and

transportation, sustainable agriculture and food system, and protection and restoration of the ecosystem can create a future that fulfils the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their requirements.

The promotion of a sustainable culture is greatly aided by education. Promoting environmental education from an early age is recommended, as it helps people to grow a sense of accountability towards the environment and realize the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues. Increasing awareness through campaigns, media, community engagement, and embracing a circular economy can inspire sustainable behaviours and decision-making. Future research in this area may be based on wider geographical area to identify the source of discrepancies between the value-action gap among students. With the goal of reduction of this gap, we can build a kind and sustainable world.

#### Limitations of the Study

The present study had been conducted on a sample of higher education students, aged between 18 to 23 years pursuing studies in under-graduation and post-graduation levels in colleges and universities of West Bengal. Comparisons based on certain other demographic variables, such as age, socioeconomic status, racial origin, field of study etc. could not be made due to paucity of time. All the respondents were the residents of urban and suburban areas of West Bengal. A sample covering wider geographical areas, considering the rural areas could have enhanced the applicability of the findings. Due to the heat wave situation in West Bengal, in consonance with the Government imposed order, the colleges were temporarily shut down and online classes were conducted. This led to curtailing the sample to a smaller size than was

previously planned. Moreover, the online mode of data collection had to be considered. A larger sample size could have given more satisfactory and comprehensive results by going deeper into the probe.

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**Adrija Bhattacharyya**,  
Department of Psychology, Bethune

College, Kolkata, [adrijabhattacharyya1999@gmail.com](mailto:adrijabhattacharyya1999@gmail.com)

**Mohua Chatterjee**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Bethune College, 181, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata 700006, [mohuachatterji2012@gmail.com](mailto:mohuachatterji2012@gmail.com)